VMBA's Template and Guidelines for Successful Grant Writing
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Write a grant proposal with energy and excitement as you strive to turn your ideas into meaningful and impactful initiatives in your communities.

You have a great idea, you're the best person or organization to achieve a specific goal, and your job in writing a grant is to get others excited too. Consider your grant proposal a work of imagination. Draw your readers in. Get them as excited about your project as you are from the first paragraph of your proposal to the end.

Grant Writing Outline

1. **Know your audience (and speak to them if you can)**. Research the grant, what it's been awarded to in the past, and what the grantor's priorities are. A grant written for VMBA will be very different than a grant written for Mascoma Bank, VOREC, RTP, or other possible funders. Learn about each grantor's priorities and what they care about.
2. **Read (and re-read) the RFP**. Bullet out the critical components a proposal must include. Be as specific as possible with what the grantor is asking for.
3. **Make an outline.** Structure your grant proposal with an introduction that covers the main points of who you are, what you want, and why. Expand on those points in subsequent paragraphs.
4. **Cut to the chase.** The first paragraph of your grant should state who you are, what you want, and why you want it. Make your ask concise and brief. Provide supporting info in subsequent paragraphs. This is your elevator speech.
5. **Resist the urge to include non-relevant information**. Whoever is reading this grant proposal is probably reading a lot of grant proposals. Make yours stand out by providing everything the grantor needs to know, and nothing else. Refer to the requirement list you made earlier and 'tick off' the boxes.
6. **Explain the specific need**. Why does your Chapter need this specific grant in the context of your organization's larger investment in the project and other funding sources?
7. **Create a structure with headings**. Demonstrate that you meet all grant criteria by using subheads that correspond to each grant criteria and organizing accordingly. Break up your content. Use subheads. Let people find your information more easily.
8. **Establish your credibility/Provide a track record.** Include additional information and/or documentation to convince the grantors that you will be successful. Ideally, show previous successful applications of grant funding and associated outcomes that match the goals of this RFP. Reference the grantors priorities
9. **Create a compelling closing**. Just like in your intro, ensure your closing is clear and concise and that it positions the project relevant to the RFP's desired outcomes as well as the values and goals of the granting organization. Grant readers often read grant intros and conclusions carefully and skim through the middle of proposals, which is another reason to use headers and avoid extraneous info.

10. **Put visuals at the end.** If you will include maps or imagery, include them as an addendum at the end of the proposal.
11. **Get an honest assessment.** Have someone who is not intimately familiar with the project read the proposal and give you feedback. If their eyes glaze over before they've finished reading, go back to the drawing board (or at least the editing floor). Don't get overwhelmed by feedback–it's not personal, and if you listen it will help you do better
12. **Know your project.** Have budgets, history, and concrete data.
13. **Don't be emotional in your language**, use language that creates emotion in other people. Pass on words like amazing, and incredible. Provide the facts. Show people you're awesome, don't tell them that you're awesome
14. **Spell check!** Download Grammarly for free. Have a friend or colleague proofread your proposal.
15. **Follow-through**. If you aren't awarded the grant, follow up and ask for feedback. If you can get the grantor to spend a few minutes chatting with you about your proposal, you may glean valuable information for a resubmission next year, or for other proposals, you have in the works.